



## Dealing with abusive and violent visitors

<b>ODBST Level 1 Statutory Policy:</b>	<b>ALL</b> Schools require this policy with <b>no changes</b> allowed to core text. No changes are necessary to personalise this with school name and branding, as this is a Trust level policy for use, without change, by all schools, <b>except</b> where a school contact is required as identified in the content of the policy. LGBs will <b>note</b> adoption in LGB meetings. Review will take place at Trust level, and schools will be notified of updates and review dates as necessary.
<b>Other related ODBST policies and procedures:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</li> <li>• Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• Complaints and Resolutions Policy</li> <li>• Visitor Management Policy</li> <li>• Staff Wellbeing Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Committee responsible:</b>	SEC
<b>Approved by:</b>	SEC
<b>Date Approved:</b>	October 2025
<b>Review Date:</b>	Autumn term 2026

## **1. Policy Statement**

Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all staff, pupils, and visitors. The Trust recognises that the majority of visitors to our schools are supportive and respectful. However, in rare instances, aggressive, abusive, or violent behaviour may occur.

This policy outlines the Trust's approach to managing such situations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. The Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to violence, threatening behaviour, and abuse directed towards staff, pupils, or other visitors.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all ODBST schools and covers all individuals who visit school premises, including but not limited to:

- Parents and carers
- Family members and guardians
- Contractors and service providers
- Members of the public
- Any other visitors to school premises

## **3. Definitions**

### **3.1 Unacceptable Behaviour**

Unacceptable behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Shouting, aggressive language, or using a raised voice in a threatening manner
- Physical intimidation or threatening gestures
- Use of offensive, abusive, or discriminatory language (including racist, sexist, homophobic, or other discriminatory remarks)
- Damage to property
- Physical violence or assault
- Threatening behaviour towards staff, pupils, or other visitors
- Harassment or intimidation
- Behaviour that negatively disrupts the normal operation of the school
- Sending abusive emails, letters, or messages (including via social media)

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 The Board of Trustees**

- Approve and review this policy annually
- Ensure adequate resources and support are available to implement the policy effectively

### **4.2 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

- Oversee the implementation of this policy across all Trust schools
- Support Headteachers in managing serious incidents
- Review and approve site bans as appropriate

#### 4.3 Headteachers

- Implement this policy within their school
- Ensure all staff are aware of procedures
- Take appropriate action in response to incidents
- Decide on appropriate sanctions, including temporary or permanent bans
- Report serious incidents to the CEO and, where appropriate, to the police

#### 4.4 All Staff

- Treat all visitors with respect and professionalism
- Remain calm and attempt to de-escalate situations where appropriate
- Report all incidents of abusive or violent behaviour
- Follow procedures for their own safety and that of others

### 5. Procedures for Managing Incidents

#### 5.1 Immediate Response

When faced with aggressive, abusive, or violent behaviour, staff should:

1. **Prioritise safety:** Remove themselves and others from immediate danger if possible
2. **Remain calm:** Speak in a calm, measured tone and avoid escalating the situation
3. **Request assistance:** Alert senior staff or colleagues immediately
4. **Set boundaries:** Firmly but politely inform the visitor that their behaviour is unacceptable
5. **Do not engage:** Avoid arguing or retaliating
6. **Call the police:** In cases of physical violence, threats, or behaviour that poses a serious risk, call 999 immediately

#### 5.2 De-escalation Techniques

Where safe to do so, staff may attempt to de-escalate the situation by:

- Listening actively and acknowledging the visitor's concerns
- Speaking calmly and maintaining a respectful tone
- Offering to discuss concerns at a later time when the visitor has calmed down
- Maintaining appropriate physical distance
- Suggesting a private meeting space away from pupils and other visitors

#### 5.3 Recording Incidents

All incidents must be recorded promptly using the school's incident report form. The report should include:

- Date, time, and location of the incident

- Names of individuals involved (visitor and staff)
- Description of what happened, including specific language used if relevant
- Names of any witnesses and statements
- Actions taken in response
- Any injuries or damage to property

#### **5.4 Follow-up Actions**

Following an incident, the Headteacher will:

- Review the incident report and any witness statements
- Provide support to affected staff members
- Determine appropriate sanctions (see Section 6)
- Communicate decisions to the visitor in writing
- Report to the CEO if the incident is serious or results in a ban

### **6. Sanctions and Restrictions**

#### **6.1 Warning Letter**

For a first incident of unacceptable behaviour, or less serious incidents, the Headteacher may issue a formal written warning outlining:

- The behaviour that occurred
- Why it is unacceptable
- Expected standards of behaviour
- Consequences of further incidents

#### **6.2 Conditional Access**

The Headteacher may impose conditions on a visitor's access to the school premises, such as:

- Requiring appointments to be made in advance
- Limiting contact to specific staff members
- Requiring communication to be in writing only

#### **6.3 Temporary Ban**

In cases of serious or repeated unacceptable behaviour, the Headteacher may impose a temporary ban from school premises. The ban will specify:

- The duration of the ban (typically between 10 and 30 school days)
- A review date to consider whether the ban should be extended
- Alternative arrangements for matters relating to the child's education
- Conditions for lifting the ban

### **7. Legal Framework**

Under the Education Act 1996, schools have the power to ban individuals from their premises where their behaviour poses a risk to pupils, staff, or the smooth operation of the school. Breaching a ban is a criminal offence under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

The Trust will work with police and local authorities as appropriate to enforce bans and take legal action where necessary.

### **8. Right to Appeal**

Any individual who has been banned from school premises has the right to appeal the decision. Appeals should be made in writing to the CEO within 10 school days of receiving notification of the ban. The appeal will be reviewed by a 3-person panel comprising the CEO and at least one Trustee not previously involved in the case.

The decision of the appeals panel is final. The ban remains in force during the appeals process unless the panel decides otherwise.

### **9. Staff Support and Wellbeing**

ODBST recognises the impact that abusive or violent behaviour can have on staff wellbeing. Following an incident, affected staff members will be offered:

- Immediate support from senior leadership
- Time to recover if needed
- Access to occupational health or counselling services
- Assistance with reporting to police if required
- Support with any legal proceedings

### **10. Training and Awareness**

All staff will receive training on:

- Recognising potentially challenging situations
- De-escalation techniques
- Procedures for reporting and recording incidents
- Personal safety and when to call for assistance

### **11. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. The review will consider:

- The number and nature of incidents reported
- Effectiveness of procedures
- Staff feedback
- Changes to legislation or best practice
- Lessons learned from specific incidents